



LEXINGTON - FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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Newberry praises Chandler for securing funds to clean up environment

Congressman Ben Chandler today announced a grant of \$1.18 million in federal funds that will be used to help clean up the most one of Lexington's most persistent polluters, the South Elkhorn pump station.

The funds, secured by Chandler in the federal budget, will be used to help replace the pump station and build a larger sewer line between the new pump station and the West Hickman Wastewater Treatment Plant, located just over the county line in Jessamine County. Total cost of the project is \$18 million.

"We have been working with Mayor Newberry and the Urban County Government to address environmental, water and sewer issues, and I commend the Mayor for his leadership," Chandler said. "The money is a proactive step in the right direction toward fixing our systems and protecting the environment in Fayette County, Jessamine County and other areas of Central Kentucky."

Newberry, Jessamine County Judge-Executive Neal Cassidy and Councilmember Ed Lane thanked Chandler for fighting for the funding. "Cleaning up our environment is my top priority and these funds will help us fix a very serious problem," Newberry said.

The larger sewer line, a force main, will run between the new pump station and the West Hickman plant. It will serve both Fayette and Jessamine counties. "It makes good

sense to take a regional approach to addressing this problem. Sewers do not recognize arbitrary county boundaries. If we want to ensure that our environment is clean, we have to think about our neighbor's environment, as well."

The pump station, located off Harrodsburg Road in southwest Fayette County, was built in the 1980s. Most sanitary sewer lines are gravity lines. Pump stations are needed when gravity is not enough to move wastewater through sewer lines.

Charles Martin, director of the Division of Water Quality, said the South Elkhorn station has been the site of more overflows of raw sewage than any other overflow site in the county because the pump station does not have sufficient capacity to handle the flow during wet weather. When there is an overflow at the South Elkhorn pump station, raw sewage flows into South Elkhorn Creek. Work is expected to begin on the sewer line later this year. Work on the pump station will begin in the spring of 2009. Completion of both projects is scheduled for 2010.

"Because of this pump station and many other problems with overflows, the city has been one of the biggest polluters in town, but that is changing," Newberry said. The city is working to settle a 2006 suit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state filed against Lexington over violations of the Clean Water Act. Under a proposed consent decree, or settlement, in the case, Lexington agrees to remedy designated sewage overflows.

Newberry said he is not letting the sometimes slow pace of the legal proceedings delay work to clean up the environment. "We're forging ahead while we wait for the case to be wrapped up," the Mayor said. "It's the right thing to do for our community and its future."